9. THE WHOLE MAN

> Contrary to all ancient and modern anthropological dualism, biblical psychology is *monistic*, that is, it presents man as a perfect and indissoluble unity: body, soul, and spirit. . . . Its importance for the comprehension of the Bible could not be exaggerated: for the understanding of man this notion is essential.
>
> J.R. Zurcher *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1969) p.150

> Anatomize man, take a view of all his lineaments and dimensions, of all his members and faculties, and consider their state severally, and all are transitory, even all that goeth to the subject man is corruptible, and himself but a bundle of corruption. . . . If all of man that goeth to his manhood be mortal, where, then, or what, is this immortal thing the soul they talk of?
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> Richard Overton *Man's Mortalitie* (1644) p.13

Few doctrines which re-appeared during the seventeenth century were met with more suspicion and hostility than those of the Mortalists or 'Soul-Sleepers'. Mortalists believed that man did not possess an inherently immortal soul, distinct from the body, but that Christ had brought immortality to light through the Gospel and that man's hope of eternal life was conditional upon his relationship to Christ and upon the resurrection of the body at the Last Day. In 1646 Richard Overton was sent to the Tower for having written a book which explained the Mortalist viewpoint, and in 1658 Thomas Hall listed Mortalism as one of the 'devilish' errors of the time. It had, as a matter of fact, appeared in England more than a hundred years previously in the teachings of William Tyndale, and had been condemned as heretical in the Forty-two Articles of Religion of 1553. The hostility which Mortalism attracted during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was due in large part to the fact that the true position of the Mortalists was misunderstood. It was felt that they were striking at the fundamental gospel hope of eternal life by denying that at death the souls of the righteous went to heaven. That they were not in fact attacking the promise of eternal life will become evident as this chapter unfolds.

The Mortalist viewpoint concerned itself with very much more than theological speculations as to what might happen or might not happen at death. It involved, more fundamentally, the nature of man as a created being, his relationship in redemption to Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the body, and the obligations of living the present life to the total glory of God. All this, and more beside, is contained in a phrase which occurred frequently in the writings of the time, and which provides the title of this chapter. 'The whole man' was man in his entirety, body and soul together, or, as the Mortalists would insist, body and spirit together, constituting the soul or the whole man, a psychosomatic unity which in its wholeness was the object of redemption. These were the views which had early appealed to Wycliffe and Tyndale and which also appealed to men in the seventeenth century like the poet, John Milton, and the philosophers, Thomas Hobbes and Henry Layton.

The Nature of Man

In order to see man as the Mortalists saw him, it is necessary to begin at the beginning. The Genesis record not only asserted that God had created man, but also explained how that act of creation had taken place: 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul' (Genesis ii 7). Into the body which the Creator had fashioned from the dust of the ground, He breathed what Scripture termed the 'breath of life'. This union of body and breath resulted in 'a living soul', in a rational, functioning entity called 'man'. To understand the Mortalist view it is of the utmost importance to recognise that they held that the Bible nowhere taught that at creation God infused into the body a separate entity called the soul, which in some inexplicable way caused the body to function and provided rationality and personality. Man in his wholeness came into being with the union of the body and the 'breath of life'. Richard Overton says of this divine act, 'When God had moulded, formed, and completely proportionated Adam of the dust of the ground, He breathed in his face the breath of lives, and man became a living soul ... that is He gave that lifeless body a communicative rational faculty or property of life, ... and so it became a living creature, or complete *anthropos*'.[1] Henry Layton observes that as a result of the union of body and breath man 'became a living person,' and that although there is a specific reference in Genesis ii 7 to the creation of man's body, 'there is no mention at all of creating a soul for him'. Layton says that the body thus formed was complete and ready to function in every way, needing only the breath to bring it to life and activity. This provided, 'the blood and humours then pullulant and ready for that operation were tinded and kindled into a flame ... which from that time continued and resided in the blood and humours of the body, acting and moving Adam's whole body and every part'. The life thus begun in Adam was perpetuated and sustained in like manner, 'by the gusts of the ambient air drawn through the lungs'.[2] Again on Genesis ii 7 Thomas Hobbes comments, 'God gave unto him vital motion .... He gave him life and breath, that is, made him a living creature.'[3] Overton says more explicitly:

> That lifeless lump became a living soul, and not such a living soul, another creature, a distinct being of itself, was infused into that formed matter, that had its being before that infusion and can be when the body ceaseth, as is vulgarly supposed. That which was breathed, before it was breathed was not a living soul, but that which was breathed upon

> became the living soul. No living soul was ascribed to man before that, so that man was formed, and became ~~a living soul.~~[4]

In the eyes of the writers who challenged the accepted doctrine of the soul's separate existence and inherent immortality, it was essential to grasp the fundamental truth contained in the Genesis account of man's origin.

It may be seen from what has just been said that a correct interpretation of the phrase 'breath of life' was of some importance. Mortalists insisted that it meant ~~what it said and no more, and that there were~~ no grounds ~~whatsoever for any other interpretation~~. 'The breath of life which God breathed into Adam's nostrils was not an immaterial intelligent substance,'[5] Layton asserts. It 'signifies no more but that God gave him life,'[6] says Hobbes. The Mortalists believed that it was in this sense that the Bible generally used the word 'spirit' when speaking of the breath in man and other living creatures. This could be clearly seen, for example, in Job xxvii 3, 'All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils.' The literal meaning of this text is found in the margin of the Authorised Version, and is given as 'the breath which God gave him'. The spirit here was no more than the breath which enabled life to continue. ~~Similarly the statement in Ezekiel i 20,~~ 'the spirit of life was in the wheels,' was equivalent to 'the wheels were alive'. And Hobbes explained that Ezekiel ii 2, 'the spirit entered into me, and set me on my feet,' meant 'recovered my vital strength' and not that any ghost 'or incorporeal substance entered into and possessed his body'.[7] The poet John Milton says that the creation record and other passages of Scripture teach that the spirit is to be equated with the breath, and 'that when God infused the breath of life into man, what man thereby received was not a portion of God's essence, or a participation of the divine nature'.[8] Even a convinced opponent of Mortalism like ~~George Downham~~ admits that the Greek word for 'spirit' in the New Testament, *pneuma*, 'being derived from *pneuo*, "to breathe", doth properly signify, in which sense it is often used, . . . the spirit of the nostrils,'[9] that is to say, the breath. Milton, then, is able to say with some conviction, '~~Nor has the word~~ spirit any other meaning in the sacred writings, but that breath of life which we inspire'.[10] It is indeed Milton in the ~~*Treatise of Christian Doctrine* (re~~discovered in 1824) who ~~sets forth what is so clearly the~~ basis of the Mortalist view:

> Man is a living being, intrinsically and properly one and individual, not compound or separable, not, according to the common opinion, made up and framed of two distinct and different natures, as of soul and body, but that the whole man is soul and the soul man, that is to say, a body, or substance individual, animated, sensitive, and rational; and that the breath of life was neither a part of the divine essence, nor the soul itself, but as it were an inspiration of some divine virtue fitted for the exercise of life and reason, and infused into the organic body; for man himself, the whole man, when finally created, is called in express terms a living soul.[11]

Root of 'original sin'

The discerning reader will realise that in all this there is much more than abstruse theological hair-splitting. These issues lie at the heart of some of the most fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith, and it was precisely for this reason that the Mortalists of the seventeenth century wanted them thoroughly discussed and thoroughly understood. The real issue was that man was in essence mortal, subject to death, and not possessing inherently the property to live for ever. Adam, of course, had been given a conditional immortality in Paradise, and this the Mortalists recognised. His immortality had been dependent upon his obedience and when he failed to obey he forfeited the right he might have had to live for ever. Hobbes says that, 'God created Adam in an estate of living for ever which was conditional, that is to say, if he disobeyed not His commandment.' And again, 'Adam was created in such a condition of life, as had he not broken the commandment of God, he had enjoyed it in the Paradise of Eden eternally.'[12] However, since Adam did not obey, he forfeited that eternal life which might have been his, with the result that 'mortality entered upon himself, and his posterity, by his first sin'.[13] We are left to conjecture why Hobbes has not enjoyed the same respect as a theological writer as he has as a philosopher, since on this, as on other aspects of Puritan theology, he gives evidence of a grasp of basic issues at least equal to that of the best Puritan theologians and better than many. On Adam's loss of conditional immortality, Hobbes assures us that what Adam had lost, Christ had regained. 'Christ's passion is a discharge of sin to all that believe on him,' he says, 'and by consequence, a restitution of eternal life to all the faithful.'[14] Man, therefore, still has the promise of immortality, conditional now on his acceptance of Christ rather than on his obedience to God's specific command in Eden. The new dependence on Christ for eternal life and immortality again points to the simple fact that man, to borrow the title of one of Richard Overton's books on the subject, was 'wholly mortal'.

But what of mankind in general? Overton is at pains to stress that all men are mortal by natural generation as a consequence of Adam's mortality, and we may profitably pause to follow his reasoning here. Just as the entire tree is potentially in the seed, so the whole man is potentially 'in the seed of mankind'. All Adam's posterity were wholly in him both quantitatively, and qualitatively, 'so that whatsoever in time is actual by procreation, it was at first potentially wholly in its original'.[15] This means that 'mortal Adam must beget mortal children in his own likeness'. It is wholly contrary to logic and experience, to say nothing of revelation in Scripture, to believe that that which is immortal can 'generatively proceed from that which is mortal'. Scripture lays down the principle that 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh' (John iii 6), and therefore Overton says, 'by this mortal flesh cannot be generated an immortal spiritual soul that can subsist by itself dissolved from the flesh'.[16] Overton also sees in Job x 10-12 a synopsis of the whole procreative process by which man is made, 'from the act of generation even to his breathing,' a process which does not permit any deviation from natural law as laid down by the Creator, and which accordingly has no room at any stage for the supernatural infusion of an immortal soul. 'Whence it is clear,' Overton concludes, 'that whole man, flesh and spirit, is a second act [an act of secondary creation], formed in the womb.'[17] John Locke, the philosopher, states the case very neatly: 'But Adam, transgressing the command given him by his heavenly Father, incurred the penalty, forfeited that state of immortality, and became mortal. After this Adam begot children, but they were in his own likeness, after his own image; mortal, like their father.'[18]

A question of some magnitude presents itself at this stage of the enquiry. If, as the Mortalists maintained, the Bible taught that the whole man *was* a living soul as distinct from *possessing* a soul, how was the word 'soul' to be understood? Since it appeared frequently in the Bible, what did it signify? The short answer to this question was that it meant many things, as used in Scripture, depending upon the context and usage, but that it never meant a separate incorporeal entity such as was commonly believed to inhabit the body during life and then ascend to heaven at death. Hobbes quotes several biblical passages to support the position that the word 'soul' in Scripture 'signifieth always either the life, or the living creature, and the body and soul jointly, the body alive'.[19] Referring to Genesis i 20, in which the words 'creeping' and 'soul' appear in the original for 'moving creature', Hobbes points to the Authorised Version which adds 'that hath life'. 'Soul', here, stands for a creature which lives. In the following verse the original Hebrew text speaks of 'great sea monsters and souls', which is translated by 'great whales, and every living creature that moveth'. Following the Flood, God promised, 'Neither will I again smite ... every thing living,' that is, says Hobbes, 'every living creature' (Genesis viii 21). Again, in Deuteronomy xii 23, the text reads literally 'the blood is the soul,' but is translated by 'the blood is the life'. 'From which places,' Hobbes concludes, 'if by soul were meant a substance incorporeal, with an existence separated from the body, it might as well be inferred of any other living creature as of man.'[20] The argument is, of course, that the Hebrew word 'soul' does not refer intrinsically to an immaterial immortal entity. Indeed, it was generally recognised by biblical scholars that the word 'soul', when used in conjunction with man, generally referred to the person, to the whole man as such. Andrew Willett comments in this respect on Leviticus vi 2, 'if a soul sin and commit a trespass against the Lord,' by saying, 'that is, any person', for by this phrase it is 'usual in Scripture to take the soul for the person'.[21] And Richard Overton points out, 'In Scripture it [soul] is variously used upon various occasions,' as, for example, 'for the stomach, Proverbs xxvii 4; for the eyes, Jeremiah xiii 17; for the heart, I Samuel xviii; for God, Proverbs ix 16, Hebrews x 38, Jeremiah xiv 17; for the dead body, Psalm xvi 10; for the whole man, Leviticus vii 19, iv 1, Acts vii 14, Numbers xv 39, Romans xiii 1, Genesis xii 5, Acts ii 41, I Peter iii 20; for breath, Acts xx 10; for life, Isaiah liii 17'.[22]

Similarly the Greek word, *psuche*, translated as 'soul' in the New Testament, has other meanings, such as mind, life and heart, and in classical Greek several further meanings beyond these, such as will, delight, pleasure, affection, breath, mind, wind, anger, memory, thought, etc.[23] Overton's conclusion from the biblical evidence is similar to that which we have previously noted from Hobbes, 'From these places, those parts may as well be proved so many souls, or spirits of immortality, as from those where it is put for breath, or life'.[24] To this substantial array of textual evidence Henry Layton added the argument that the onus of proving the innate immortality of man lay with those who believed that doctrine to be true. If it could be demonstrated that the soul, during the lifetime of a man, acted even in some instances of itself, and apart from the body, then the immortal soul theory would be worthy of serious consideration. But since it is clearly evident that the soul cannot function without the body, as it cannot think, or remember, or understand as an immaterial entity, there is no ground for maintaining its separate existence. On the basis of the biblical evidence, then, it seemed quite incorrect to the Mortalists to say that the soul was a non-material entity, or that man himself was intrinsically immortal. Instead, they said that immortality was provided through the Gospel, and that eternal life 'was effected, revealed, consigned, and insured to man, in and through Christ, and will be accomplished in no other way than that spoken of by Christ and His apostles'.[25]

Death and Resurrection

The real point at issue between the Mortalists and those who opposed their doctrine centred on death and what happened to man beyond the present life. John Milton stood firm in the conviction that the accepted definition of death, 'which supposes it to consist in the separation of soul and body' was 'inadmissable'. If this was a true concept of death, Milton wanted to know whether it was the soul or body that actually died? Those who believed that soul and body were separated at death would not agree that the soul died, for in their view the soul was immortal, yet the body could not be said to die since by their own definition the body had no life of itself, being merely the house of the soul.[26] The logical conclusion from this was that death was not death at all, but continuing life, a point which Richard Overton was quick to recognise. 'If nothing died,' Overton says, 'but his body, then that died and his soul lived.' This meant that the body returned to its pre-animated state in which it was totally divorced of life, and the soul, having life in itself and being the life of the body, continued to exist after the moment of separation. 'And thus it must needs follow,' Overton concludes, 'that this death threatened [to Adam as a consequence of disobedience] was a mere scarecrow, even nothing at all.'[27] Referring to the related doctrine of eternal hell-fire, John Locke comments, 'It seems a strange way of understanding . . . the plainest and directest words, that by death should be meant eternal life in misery.'[28]

The argument, then, revolved around the nature of death, and it seemed to the Mortalists a very short step indeed from belief in an immortal soul to an outright attack on the basic premise upon which the Gospel itself was ~~built, for if there~~ was no death, what need was there for a life-giver? To give ~~the Mortalists their due, it was~~ this very concern which lay at the heart of their position, and which in retrospect has earned them the deserved character of 'Christian Mortalists', as in the work of N.T. Burns, *Christian Mortalism from Tyndale ~~to Milton~~* ~~(1972).~~

To Milton, death was correctly defined as 'the loss or extinction of life',[29] and it occurred through a direct reversal of the process by which man had been created in the beginning. The union of the body and the breath had resulted in life, now the dissolution of body and breath resulted in death. When the breath, or the spirit, to use the word in the sense in which the Bible writers frequently used it, left the body, death followed. Indeed, since the soul did not exist as a separate entity, the breath was the only thing which could leave the body at the moment of dissolution. Milton turns here to Psalm civ 29-30, where creation and dissolution are set together in relationship to breath and spirit, and observes that 'Every living thing receives animation from one and the same source of life and breath, inasmuch that when God takes back to Himself that spirit or breath of life, they cease to exist.'[30] Here is the reversal of the creation experience. ~~George Hammon,~~ pastor of the General Baptist Church at Biddenden in ~~Kent and a staunch~~ advocate of the Mortalist view, says that when death occurs the body returns to dust and the spirit 'which liveth or dwelleth in it returneth to God'.[31] Overton argues that since there is 'no immortality in fallen man, . . . he is wholly dissoluble'. This means that at death every element returns to its original state, 'His earthly part unto the earth, his moisture or watery part unto the water . . . his airy part unto the air, and thus the composition man returneth to his simples, and so ceaseth from his being.'[32] Death, then, obvious as it is and unnecessary as it may appear to explain it, is simply the opposite of life. It is the separation of body and breath as opposed to the separation of body and soul, and it results in the non-existence of that living being called man which hitherto had existed as an intelligent functioning creature.

It logically followed that the condition of man immediately after death, or at any time subsequent to the dissolution of body and breath, was one of total rest, total cessation from mental and bodily activity. George Hammon explained that without that spirit which returned to God at death (i.e. the breath), the body 'is not in capacity, or capable of joy,' and that '~~there is no~~ ~~remembrance~~ of time or any thing amongst the dead'.[33] Death is a time of waiting, of resting, metaphorically speaking, of non-being, to be more accurate. Milton, as we might expect, comes with a carefully prepared list of biblical references, of which those relating to David served his purpose as well as any: 'For in death there in no remembrance of thee' (Psalm vi 5); 'O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, ~~and be no~~ more' (Psalm xxxix 13); 'The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence' (Psalm cxv 17); 'While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being' (Psalm cxlvi 2). The Hebrew view of life and death as represented here in the experience of David causes Milton to comment, 'Certainly if he had believed that his soul would survive and be received immediately into heaven, he would have abstained from all such remonstrances, as one who was shortly to take his flight where he might praise God unceasingly.'[34] It was a fair comment on an experience which fairly represented the Old Testament view of death as a whole. Layton speaks similarly of the human experience in general. Breath sustains the body for the duration of life, but when the spirit/breath is withdrawn 'we die and are turned to our earth, and all our thoughts perish; our fancies, intellects and memories, our learning and abilities, as well as our love and our hatred, our passions and affections'.[35] Death brings with it a cessation of the normal functions of the mind. During death, Overton adds, 'There is no more present being to man than to a hidden, abortive embryo, ... no more capability than light to unborn infants, no more oppression or torment than when there is none to oppress, which is to say, he absolutely IS NOT.'[36]

The most accepted definition of death in Puritan theology — and this applies equally to the advocates of the natural immortality of man as to the Mortalists — was that death is a sleep. Indeed, to read Thomas Adams on this point one might be excused for concluding that he belonged to the Mortalist camp himself. 'The death of the godly is often called a sleep,' he says. 'It is said of the patriarchs and kings of Judah, "they slept with their fathers." So Paul saith, "they sleep in Christ". The coffin is a couch ... wherein he takes good rest that hath wrought hard in the work of his salvation before he went to bed.' But it is a sleep that will end, and Adams continues, 'So the godly sleep till the sound of a trumpet shall waken them, and then eternal glory shall receive them.'[37] In the light of statements like this, it is difficult to grasp the fact that Adams did not espouse Mortalism but that he clung to the accepted doctrine of the soul's immortality and its continued existence in heaven after death. Adams' views must be regarded as a measure of the confusion concerning the whole subject of death and immortality which persisted among the immortal-soul advocates, in contrast to the logical clarity of the Mortalist viewpoint. Adams' description of death as a sleep, representative as it was of the wider Puritan concept, was in harmony with the Mortalist position and might well have been the point at which mutual understanding began, had that desire been as genuine as it appears to be today. Certainly the comparison of death to sleep was an extremely important element in the Mortalist position, and for a readily understandable reason it found expression in many of the Mortalist writings. Thomas Lushington, recognising that man is a creature of time, relates the human experience of time to the sleep of death:

> For when we are dead, and thereby void of all sense of time, the last moment of our life departing, and the first moment of our life returning

> (for return it shall at the last judgement) will seem one and the same to us at our rising again to life. They who lie in a deep sleep are not sensible of the time that passeth, though the time be very long, and death is a deeper sleep than any sleep of those that sleep alive. And this is the cause why the holy Scriptures do sometimes speak so, as if we should wholly live till the coming of Christ, or were presently after our death translated to the Lord, and so to the joys of heaven. For they have no regard of the time intercurrent between the last end of our life, and the coming of Christ, and the future happiness of the godly.[38]

Henry Layton likewise emphasises that time is of no consequence in death:

> We may observe that death in the New Testament is frequently called and compared to a sleep, and that the most sound and profound. And in such a sleep . . . whatsoever time passes over the sleeper's head, he hath no perceivance of. If it be two, ten, or twenty hours, the length or shortness of the passing time doth not at all appear to the sleeper, but at his waking he rises as if he had been but newly fallen asleep. Man's death is such a profound sleep, and his resurrection such a waking. If during that sleep there go over the dead man's head, months or years to an hundred or a thousand, this is no way perceivable by the dead person. When he rises, it will be but as if he had newly fallen asleep.[39]

The objection which many raised to the Mortalist teaching was that it robbed the believer of his hope of heaven and eternal life, leaving him with nothing to look for beyond death. Those who read carefully the preceding statements, and the many like them which could be found in the works of other Mortalist writers, would see that such objections were unfounded. In terms of practical experience, death made no difference to the believer's inheritance. As Overton would say, 'Though there be long time to the living till the resurrection, there is none to the dead.'[40]

It would be a serious distortion of Christian Mortalism in the seventeenth century if some emphasis were not placed on the positive nature of the Mortalist hope. The very word 'sleep' implies life rather than death, and those whose lives were hid with Christ in God were assured that at the appointed time there would be an awakening from sleep. The appointed time was the Last Day, the resurrection day when Christ would come again to break the power of the grave, and call forth its captives to everlasting life. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to over-emphasise the importance of Christ's coming at the Last Day and the resurrection of the body in the scheme of redemption as Mortalists saw it propounded in Scripture. Layton says that 'the whole profession and practice of Christian religion is vain'[41] without the resurrection of the body. In making this assertion the Mortalists are not simply bringing to a convenient theological conclusion the scheme of redemption. They are declaring that the resurrection of the body is the only way to eternal life, for the resurrection of the body is in effect the resurrection of the whole man. Layton says that which dies also rises 'as wheat comes of wheat, and barley of barley,' so that man in his wholeness will come forth from the resurrection, 'the same person, soul and body, that died shall be revived and rise again'. This means the total man, 'his senses ... intellect, and judgements; his affections and passions, his knowlege and memory'.[42] It is the resurrection which is the focal point of Christian hope, the tangible recreation of man in his wholeness, rather than the survival of a partial, immaterial entity beyond death.

Milton defends the certainty of the resurrection from I Thessalonians iv 13-17, where Paul exhorts the Thessalonian believers to 'sorrow not, even as others which have no hope'. 'Why should they sorrow and have no hope,' Milton asks, 'if they believed that their souls would be in a state of salvation and happiness before the resurrection?'[43] It is to the resurrection that Paul directs the hope of believers, rather than to the survival of the individual soul. If we believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus, Milton argues, then we may have total confidence in the future, for it is God's future in Christ and those who sleep in Christ, 'will God bring with Him, that is, to heaven from the grave'.[44] Hence those who are alive at the coming of the Lord will not go to heaven before those who have slept. All will ascend together. Paul assures those who are still living, in hope, that they will not precede the dead to glory. But as Milton says, there would have been no reason to suppose that the survivors might go to heaven before the dead, 'if they who were asleep had long since been received into heaven, in which case the latter would not come to meet the Lord, but would return with Him'.[45] The eternal reward of believers, dead or alive, is rooted in time to the resurrection of the body at the Last Day, and in history to the resurrection of Christ Himself. Christ's resurrection is the surety of the resurrection of all who believe, and both are regarded in Mortalism as crucial to man's redemption. Any version of the Gospel which depreciates either Christ's resurrection or the general resurrection of the Last Day is in truth less than the whole Gospel. Man in his wholeness must in the end inherit that which man in his wholeness had been created to enjoy in the beginning. Thus, true Christian hope looks forward to the resurrection of the body, and few expounded that hope more picturesquely than did William Hodson in his *Credo Resurrectionem Carnis*:

> A clock that is grown rusty is taken asunder by the maker's hand, disjoined wheel from wheel, and pin from pin, not to be lost, but to be repolished and put together again that it may go clearly. So death doth pluck the clock of our life asunder, when it hath struck the last stroke of breath, wheel from wheel, limb from limb, member from member, joint from joint, all to dust and pieces. But when the omnipotent Maker takes it into His own hands, and sets it together again at the resurrection, it shall go well in glory for ever.[46]

The resurrection of the body was, in fact, the resurrection of man in his wholeness, nothing less.

The Mortalists, as might be expected, soon discovered that their views were hotly contested by some of the more orthodox Puritan preachers, and it is an indication of their familiarity with the biblical evidence that they were able to refute the arguments brought against them. One example must suffice. Christ's promise to the thief on the cross was widely interpreted to support the popular notion that the righteous would receive their rewards immediately after death. The Authorised Version reads, 'Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise' (Luke xxiii 43). George Hammon had thought about this text in relationship to the biblical doctrine as a whole, and had concluded that it did not support the idea that men go immediately to heaven at death. To begin with, Christ had not ascended to heaven on the day of the crucifixion. Even after the resurrection, He had said to His followers, 'Touch me not, for I am not ascended to my Father,' although later, but still prior to the ascension, He had permitted them to touch Him. Furthermore, it could not be presumed that the thief had actually died on the day of the crucifixion. It was more likely that he had died later. Christ's death occurred at the ninth hour when there were only three hours left before the Sabbath. In accordance with Roman custom, the legs of the two thieves who were crucified with Christ were broken while they hung on the cross to prevent the possibility of an escape from what was known to be a lingering death, which sometimes lasted for several days. The thieves were not dead, probably, when Christ was taken from the cross a few hours before the Sabbath began. Hammon's comment here is worthy of note: 'Although Christ said that day to the thief that he should be with Him in paradise, yet it doth not follow that Christ and the thief were that day to be together in paradise, because the thief was not dead, nor Christ ascended that day.'[47] The more likely explanation of this text, and the one that other Mortalists also would use as being more in harmony with the total revelation of Scripture concerning man, death, and eternal life, was 'that Christ gave him a promise of paradise that day,'[48] a promise that would be fulfilled to the thief, as to all who would put their trust in Christ, at the great resurrection day.

The Doctrine of Natural Immortality

Having set forth what they believed to be the biblical teaching of man, death, resurrection and eternal life, the Mortalists felt that it was equally necessary to expose the true character of the natural-immortality doctrine. If it was not a biblical teaching, from whence did it take its origin? Why had it been almost unanimously accepted by orthodox Christendom? And what were its effects on the beliefs and practices of ordinary Christians within the body of Christ? In seeking the answers given in the seventeenth century to these questions, we will turn first to two extremely able men, who, in the 1690s, attempted to come to grips with the whole question of immortality and resurrection, which had by then rumbled on without a definitive answer for more than a hundred and fifty years since the beginning of the Reformation. Henry Layton's book, *A Search for Souls* (1692), was a genuine attempt to solve the problem of the soul's existence, and had been written as a response to the unsatisfactory theories of man's nature and destiny as Layton found them set forth from the Greek philosopher, Pythagoras, to the sixteenth-century French philosopher, Descartes. It was a judicious piece of work, comprehensive, restrained, and well-argued. Humphrey Hody's *A Resurrection of the Body* (1694) was the work of a renowned scholar, the Dean of Wadham College, Oxford, and Regius Professor of Greek at that University. Although falling short of accepting the Mortalist position, it was nevertheless an important statement of the resurrection hope in the Christian thought of the time.

Layton recognised that the idea of a separate, immortal soul was several centuries older than Christianity, and that it had been particularly strong in the pre-Christian Greek philosophy of Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.[49] Broadly speaking, the Greek view of man, as it eventually came to be associated with the Platonic school, was that dualistic concept which held that man consisted of a body and a soul, in which the material body was essentially evil, and the immaterial soul essentially good. The temporal body housed the eternal soul, which at death sought refuge in another body, though not necessarily in a human body. Hody says that this was 'the common and received opinion of the Greeks' in the pre-Christian age.[50] Into this dualistic thought-world the Christian Church was born, with its basically Hebrew emphasis on the wholeness of man and the resurrection of the body as the means by which man might attain to immortality. Layton says that the majority of early Christian thinkers, particularly the Greek and Latin fathers of the Church, rejected this pagan Greek view, and even Hody admits that belief in the resurrection of the body and soul-sleep were 'not looked upon as heretical' in the early Church.[51] Although both statements are unquestionably correct in principle, we must not overlook the immense pressure of Greek thought which inevitably came to bear on the early Christian apologists, nor Hody's equally appropriate comment that the novel Christian concept 'was by all the Greeks in general exploded, not one Christian doctrine so generally and with so much contempt rejected'.[52] Hody even suggests that the passage in I Corinthians xv relating to the resurrection of the body was written by Paul with such emphatic clarity because the Corinthian believers, with their Greek background, found the Christian view of the resurrection 'a strange and incredible thing'.[53] It is a factor too easily forgotten that in its infancy the Church faced both the open hostility of pagan Rome and the much more subtle hostility of pagan Greek philosophy.

The story of the pagan infiltration of Christian thought in the early centuries is well enough known in general and does not need to be recounted again. What is more specifically to our purpose is that eventually, as with so many other original Christian teachings, philosophical pagan influences prevailed over the biblical doctrine of man, and the Church capitulated to the pressure of Platonic dualism. Once again, Origen of Alexandria is singled out as being responsible for the departure from biblical doctrine, although it is only fair to say that many other teachers were involved in what was again a gradual transition from the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of man, which had characterised the New Testament Church, to that which took its place in the third, fourth, and succeeding centuries. Hody says it is quite clear from the writings of Origen 'and other authors' that Christian teachers in the third century 'asserted with the Platonists that the body is no part of man, but the soul alone is the whole man and that the body is the prison of the soul'.[54] That Christian belief could have come so far in such a relatively short time was due in large measure to the allegorical method of interpreting the Bible, usually attributed to Origen. By this method, that which appeared to be literal in Scripture was given a spiritual or allegorical meaning. Hody refers to Origen's explanation of the story of Adam and Eve as they existed in the Garden of Eden before the fall. Until the entrance of sin they existed without a body, according to Origen. But after sin, 'God clothed them with bodies by way of punishment, and this he [Origen] says is meant by that place in Genesis where it is said that unto Adam and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothe them. By coats of skins he [Origen] understands bodies.'[55] It is self-evident that virtually any conceivable conclusion could be reached by this method of interpretation. Just how much responsibility Origen alone must bear for introducing the Platonic idea of the soul into the Church is perhaps a matter for conjecture. Certainly his influence in moulding subsequent Christian thought was very considerable. What is beyond question is that by the fourth or fifth century the doctrine of the soul's immortality and separate existence was well established, and that it was thereafter perpetuated in orthodox Christendom in the West by the mediaeval Church. This accords with Layton's statement, made in 1692, that the doctrine had been part of Roman dogma 'for about the space of eleven hundred years, time enough to radicate and fix the belief of a self-subsisting soul in all believers deriving under that Church, or all that have been subjected thereunto'.[56]

This subtle syncretism of Greek philosophic paganism with Christian belief, while challenged to some extent by the Reformation, had not been wholly eradicated by the sixteenth-century Reformers, hence Layton's further statement that Christian theologians had unwittingly perpetuated Greek dualism since the Reformation by upholding the doctrine of the soul's immortality. To the average Christian in Puritan England, who in all likelihood was more concerned with doctrinal correctness than his counterpart in succeeding generations, this meant that Greek paganism had bequeathed error to the Church of Rome and that the Church of Rome had in turn bequeathed error to the Church of England. The burden of Christian Mortalists in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was to communicate the truth that the concept of an immortal soul was not a Christian doctrine at all, but an idea which had originated in pre-Christian paganism. Hody and Layton were by no means the only Christian thinkers in the seventeenth century to recognise the truth of all this, as Milton implies when he castigates those 'who think that truth is to be sought in the schools of philosophy rather than in the sacred writings,'[57] and as Hobbes declares outright when he says that it was 'by contagion of the demonology of the Greeks' that the Church had come to believe 'that the souls of men were substances distinct from their bodies'.[58]

The point at which all this became intensely relevant to Christian believers in Puritan England was in the continuing opposition of Protestantism to the doctrines of Rome. In the ecumenical climate of the twentieth century it is difficult for the average Churchman to sense the strength of feeling with which early Protestantism rejected the corruptions and deviations which at the time were generally believed to have come into Christian thought during the mediaeval supremacy of the Catholic Church. In some contemporary circles it might well be considered injudicious even to raise such matters. No such reluctance existed in the seventeenth century, however, and of all the errors in doctrine and practice from which Protestantism sought to cleanse the Church of Christ, more were attributable to the doctrine of the soul's immortality than to any other single corruption of which Rome might have been guilty. Thomas Hobbes calls it the 'window . . . that gives entrance to the dark doctrines' of eternal torment, purgatory, prayers for the dead, and hence of indulgences calculated to lessen the punishment of those not yet in heaven.[59] Henry Layton says that the doctrine of natural immortality is 'the only foundation' for these and kindred teachings 'which can have no common sense in them, if souls do not subsist in a state of separation'.[60] Richard Overton speaks of purgatory, infant limbo, the invocation of saints, and the adoration of Mary, and declares 'a world of such-like fancies are grounded upon the invention of the soul'.[61] Overton adds that most of the heresies and deviations present in Christian thought take their origin from the doctrine of natural immortality, and further, that 'the kingdom of Antichrist depends upon it'.

Antichrist, of course, throughout the seventeenth century is essentially papal Rome, and Overton's main concern is that the doctrine of natural immortality 'undermineth Christ, undervalueth and lesseneth the purchase of His sufferings, and denieth the resurrection'.[62] This, perhaps, is the most serious charge of all, and one which the Christian Mortalists insisted on pressing. If man inherently possesses immortality, what need is there, in the last analysis, of Christ's death and resurrection, and hence of the general resurrection at the Last Day? Paul said that Christ had brought immortality to light through the Gospel. The Mortalists said that this could not be if man possessed immortality within himself. It was in this sense that Overton, and many others with him in the seventeenth century, began to understand the Antichrist, not as one openly and arrogantly opposed to Christ, but as one who took the place of Christ, a usurper who provided an alternative way of salvation and an alternative system of belief to the faith once delivered to the saints. It is, indeed, the biblical doctrine of man as understood and expounded so clearly by the Mortalists that gives all glory to Christ, and which must be defended against the insidious deviations of Antichrist. Hence Overton concludes that, 'Man hath not wherewith at all to boast . . . but is provoked wholly out of himself, to cast himself wholly on Jesus Christ with whom in God our lives are hid, that when He who is our life shall appear, we might also with Him appear in glory, to whom be the honour of our immortality for ever.'[63]

~~*The Body Temple*~~

~~The doctrine of the~~ whole man, central as it was to Christian Mortalism and its hopes, was in reality restricted neither to Mortalists, nor to the future. The concept of the whole man was widespread in Puritan thought as a whole, and it brought an immediate obligation of immense practical implications to the present life of every professing Christian. Greek philosophy had depreciated the ~~body as something intrinsically~~ evil and in opposition to the spirituality of the soul. This idea, when taken into the Christian Church and translated into practice, ~~had resulted in the severe~~ inflictions of mediaeval monasticism — ~~fasting, flagellation, self-mortification, and self-mutilation~~ — which chastened the body ~~in~~ an attempt to purify the soul. The Puritan doctrine of the whole man placed an altogether different emphasis on the body, since it recognised the essential wholeness of the individual and the corresponding inter-relationship of the mental, the physical and the spiritual. Man was not at war against himself in that sense, but was to live in recognition of the essential wholeness of his being.

Francis Bampfield recognises the interaction of mind and body when he speaks of unrestrained emotions weakening 'the whole man' and causing palpitations of the heart, an impaired appetite, a disturbed digestion and loss of strength. These, in turn, affect mental perception, 'the senses are weakened, the mind is darkened, the imagination is clouded and frighted'. All in all there are, ~~Bampfield~~ maintains, 'many sickening effects upon the whole man'.[64] Symon Patrick, the esteemed Bishop of Chichester, and later of Ely, ~~speaks for an~~ innumerable company of godly preachers when he reminds us of Paul's teaching that '~~the body of a holy~~ Christian' is 'the temple of the Holy Ghost' (I Corinthians vi 19). The body, which ~~in the Greek view is but a prison, Patrick~~ says in the apostolic view 'is a temple, when it is in Christ'. When the Lord possesses a man and rules in his life, he possesses also the body and 'makes it a place where God dwells, where God is worshipped and glorified, where God appears and manifests Himself'.[65] Another writer explains that it is a Christian duty to glorify God in the whole man, which it is impossible to do if the body is disregarded and dishonoured, as it undoubtedly will be if a man forgets that his body is 'not for drink any more than for fornication . . . or any other filthy service'.[66] The body, then, is not to be despised ~~in the Christian~~ life, and there is much wisdom and experience in ~~Thomas White's~~ conclusions that 'those delights and comforts of the body which God has created for its necessary recreation are not to be denied to a pious life in their due proportion,' and 'a pious and orderly life, truly and really more abounds with corporal delights than the life of the wicked'.[67]

At few points did the Christian's duty to care for his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit find greater expression in the Puritan pursuit of practical godliness than in the matter of diet. It is possible to read many of the great Puritan theologians whose writings have been quoted again and again in the preceding chapters of this book, and find in them the most specific advice concerning diet and its relationship to the spiritual life. William Perkins, Thomas Adams, Thomas Gataker, John Ball, Joseph Alleine and Richard Baxter, all speak of the believer's duty in Christ to look after his body by exercising a responsible control over what he eats and drinks. If, in an affluent society like our own, these men seem severe over this matter, it is only because they understand the relationship of the body and the mind, and the supremacy of the mind in spiritual matters. We may pause to note only a selection of the relevant comments, and in so doing we shall observe two pieces of advice which are to be found repeatedly in the Puritan concern with food and diet. Alleine and Baxter both plead for moderation in eating and drinking. Alleine fears that over-eating is 'a very common sin' among Christians, and advises all believers to set a special watch upon their appetites. In order to retain a healthy body it is better to eat only as much at one meal as will ensure that one is hungry again by the next meal. There are two forms of intemperance which the Christian must guard against in the matter of diet. They concern the quantity of food which is eaten, and the type of food which constitutes the diet. 'We offend in the first,' he says, 'when we eat more than we can digest,' and in the second when we eat that which is not fit to be eaten.[68] Baxter brings both possibilities together in an unusually frank comment about those who 'abuse their bodies and neglect their health':

> Its ill with men when they cram in their bellies as if they were laying provision in a garner, rather than eating for digestion, and when they are so curious and must have their devouring appetites pleased, that the cook is held in more esteem than the husbandman. . . . Those that are prone to excess, or daintiness of diet, they nourish their own diseases, and are led by the great glutton the devil, whom I will not fear to call the belly devil, which indeed is the worst and most pernicious of all devils.[69]

In Alleine's view too few Christians understand the concept of temperance as it relates to eating, and it is a 'great' and 'common evil' for a man to think that he may eat merely to satisfy his appetite.[70] Baxter adds that while animals may live to eat, Christians should eat to live and that to the glory of God. Therefore, he advises, it is a Christian duty to choose one's food with care, bearing in mind that it must be 'plain or simple', since its first function is to sustain life and since life depends on health and strength, 'for both of which nothing is better than a light and easy diet, as being most helpful to digestion and agility of the body'.[71] On the intemperate habit of over-eating, Thomas Adams observes concerning health, 'We seek it in full dishes and, behold, there we lose it.'[72] And regarding the use of correct food, John Ball advises that 'dainty meats are very dangerous and deceitful,' an 'evil' which 'faith doth wisely foresee and watch to prevent'.[73]

There is in the foregoing much of what today would pass as plain good sense, to say nothing of the knowledge more recently available from nutritional and dietetic studies. Puritanism, however, did not derive its theological conclusions from commonsense, useful as that undoubtedly was on occasions. It required the plain word of Scripture, and when the Puritan preacher turned to the Bible for guidance on the matter of eating and drinking he found, interestingly enough, not only that Paul commanded believers to eat and drink to the glory of God (I Corinthians x 31), but also that man's diet had been prescribed in the beginning by the Creator Himself. As they studied the biblical record of human origins, Puritan theologians discovered that man had been created to subsist on what would later come to be called a vegetarian diet and that the use of flesh as food had been permitted only after the Flood. Richard Overton explains, 'Beasts were not given man to eat in the Innocency, but to all flesh wherein was the breath of life, was given the green herb for meat.'[74] Andrew Willett and Samuel Mather are a little more explicit. Willett says that in the beginning animals were 'not yet necessary for food, for the herbs and fruits were sufficient for man's food,' and Mather, commenting on Genesis ix 3, which he takes as permission to eat flesh following the Flood, says, 'He enlargeth their provision of food by giving them a commission to eat the flesh of brute creatures,' although 'at first there is no mention of any other provision, but the fruits of the earth'.[75] The high priest of Puritan theology, William Perkins, makes a similar comment on the same passage: 'After the Flood flesh was permitted, but blood forbidden, Genesis ix 3-4. From that time there was commanded a distinction of meats, whereof some were clean, some unclean.'[76] A perceptive comment on man's original diet comes from Thomas Tryon, who argues that if man had continued in obedience he would never have eaten flesh, since all death, including the death of animals, is the result of sin, with the inevitable implication that flesh was never intended to be part of man's diet at all. Man, therefore, 'was put into a garden amongst innocent herbs, fruits, and grains, which were intended and ordained for his food'.[77]

With Thomas Tryon we come to one of the most interesting characters whose writings appeared during the latter part of the seventeenth century. Tryon is chiefly remembered for a book entitled *Healths Grand Preservative*, first published in 1682, and soon reprinted with a new title, *The Way to Health*. The work was remarkable, not only since it advocated a vegetarian diet in general, but also on account of its apparent foreknowledge of medical and nutritional principles which at the time were little known, if they were known at all. Tryon's views were based on the Pauline teaching of the body temple and also on the example of the prophet Daniel and his companions in the court of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar

(Daniel i 8-16). When confronted with the order to partake of the food and drink provided for the king, Tryon says that 'Daniel entreated leave to continue that clean, simple food they had accustomed themselves unto, viz, herbs, grains, and fruits, and pure water to drink'.[78] Tryon's argument is that if a vegetarian diet has proved beneficial to man in the past, it can have the same effect on men in the present. 'Our forefathers,' he says, 'did not make their stomachs the burial places of dead bodies,' yet they lived 'to wonderful ages in perfect health' on a diet consisting chiefly of 'herbs, fruits, and grains'.[79] Tryon rejects flesh as food on the grounds that it quickly putrifies both before and after consumption, and that it endangers general health and well-being since animals are widely subject to disease. The natural uncleanness of many animals argues against the use of their flesh as food, and the treatment they receive in the abattoir 'renders their flesh still more unwholesome,'[80] Tryon says. His alternative is what is known today as a lacto-vegetarian diet consisting of legumes, grains, fruits, wholewheat bread, cheese and milk, with the observation that their origin is 'more clean' and that they 'afford a more excellent nourishment'. Tryon adds that by overeating with this kind of diet 'the health will not thereby be brought into such danger as by the superfluous eating of flesh'.[81] The general tenor of Tryon's interesting book is summarised in the following quotation:

> Now the sorts of food and drinks that breed the best blood and finest spirits are herbs, fruits, and various kinds of grains, also bread, and sundry sorts of excellent food made by different preparations of milk, and all dry food, out of which the sun hath exhaled the gross humidity, by which all sorts of pulses and grains become of a firmer substance. So likewise oil is an excellent thing, in nature more sublime and pure than butter. And if you do eat fat flesh, let it be sparingly, and not without a good store of bread and herbs.[82]

There may be a reference here to the advantages of what have only recently become known as polyunsaturated fats over the so-called saturated animal fats, although we cannot be sure precisely what kind of 'oil' Tryon refers to. Be that as it may, Tryon would surely have been immensely gratified had he been able to witness the revived interest which many of his dietary suggestions have attracted in more recent years, particularly as much of that interest accords with his own conviction that the body is 'the temple of God, wherein His blessed Spirit delights to dwell, and communicate its gifts and graces'.[83]

The interest which Tryon's views on diet and vegetarianism still arouse after almost three centuries is matched, if not surpassed, by his observations regarding tobacco and the habit of smoking. Tobacco had been introduced into England late in the sixteenth century by Sir Walter Raleigh, and attempts had been made to prohibit it on various grounds both at home and in New England during the seventeenth century. James I disliked its smell; some thought that smoking was contrary to nature; others believed it encouraged farmers to neglect the production of necessary food crops. Tryon, however, opposed the use of tobacco on medical grounds, and in some of his conclusions must be judged to have been far ahead of his time. He describes tobacco as a 'herb endued with extreme qualities' and 'high poisons', useful perhaps as an ointment, and hence 'much safer being applied outwardly, than inwardly taken'.[84] Tobacco is 'one of nature's extremes', he explains, having 'a strong, fulsome, poisonous nature'. It is inherently and irreversibly contrary to man's well-being, since 'there is no way known, or preparation found out, that can destroy its poisonous qualities, or reconcile and make it friendly to man's nature'.[85] Tryon is also aware of the addictive nature of tobacco, classifying it with 'the continual use of such things [which] . . . requires their continuation,' and which 'if a man does leave them, at the first nature seems to want them,'[86] and he is concerned to underline the habit-forming pattern of tobacco:

> The first taking of it in pipes is both difficult and troublesome to nature, and there is no preparation known that will make this herb friendly or familiar to nature, but only the continual custom of taking it, which does awaken and strengthen its own quality in the stomach, which in the beginning was weak, but by custom is become strong, so great is the power of everything in increasing its likeness, and it becomes as though it were natural. And there is as much difficulty to leave the use of such things (if not more) as there was at first to make them familiar.[87]

The addictive property of tobacco is similar to that 'in brandy' and other drinks with a high alcohol content, 'the more unnatural and greater the extreme is, the more troublesome it is to leave it'.[88] We can only conclude that Tryon would have said of smoking what a contemporary said of drinking:

> It is a high offence to our glorious Creator. It perverts the end of our redemption. It unmans the man, and is a contempt of death, the grave, and hell itself. If men had any reverence for their God, Creator, Saviour, Sanctifier, if any honour to their own nature, if any sense of mortality and of the reference this mortal life hath to eternal life, they would never live it thus, throw away their time thus.[89]

In fact, he did make a similar comment, and with it we may appropriately, conclude our survey of the Puritan understanding of the wholeness of man. With due deference to the 'temple of God', Tryon addresses all who are concerned with the continuing health of body and mind. Their obligation before God is to 'make the body, pleasant, healthful, and fit to discharge all its functions . . . which must be done by sobriety, gentleness and temper~~ance in meats,~~ drinks, and exercises'.[90]

To live one's present life to the glory of God in Christ, in the whole man, is the believer's anticipation of resurrection and eternal life, in the whole man, by Christ, at the end. There were many in the seventeenth century whose concept of man in life and death was nearer to that which attracts the attention of some Christian thinkers now, than to what characterised most of their predecessors.